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## Achievement in Montana (AIM) Student Achievement System

# Frequently Asked Questions for Teachers

### Introduction

In 2005, the 59th Montana Legislature defined a basic system of free quality public education that included the requirement to assess and track student achievement (20-9-309, MCA). The legislature appropriated funding to the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) to develop and implement a statewide student achievement system that provides accurate and timely information about the performance of Montana's K-12 students and schools. The system will support education information and accountability systems at the local and state level.

To meet this mandate, a unique student identifier number will be assigned to every student **who receives any form of education service through a public school district or special education cooperative**. This includes services provided to:

- part-time and full time regularly enrolled students
- home school or private school students
- pre-school students
- students age 19, 20 or 21

### Q. What's the purpose of AIM?

A. AIM (Achievement in Montana) is the new statewide student achievement system that OPI is developing in partnership with Montana school districts. This system is designed to track a wide variety of student information, including: enrollment and demographic information for all students attending Montana public schools, scores on statewide assessments, information for determining a school's Adequate Yearly Progress report required by the No Child Left Behind Act, student graduation and dropout information, education plans for students with disabilities, and participation in federal and state education programs.

### Q. Who will use AIM and how will it make things easier?

A. AIM will markedly improve collection, availability, and use of high-quality education data, and track students' academic progress over time. District staff will use the AIM system to report student enrollments, track student transfers, compile information to share with the community, and generate state and federal reports. Members of the Child Study Teams (CST) and special education teachers who prepare Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) will use the system

to complete their required paperwork and manage workflow and timelines. Staff at the OPI will use the data for analysis and reporting.

**Q. Is the state is going to tell me what to teach based on test results?**

A. No, the purpose of the AIM system is to make information available to local school districts to determine which instructional programs and strategies work best in their schools. The state will use the system to analyze and report on trends in student performance in schools, districts and statewide. Where appropriate, OPI will support the sharing of information on successful strategies and practices for improving student achievement.

**Q. How will this system help me tailor instruction for students?**

A. The AIM system will help educators understand the broader context in which their schools operate in terms of student and community characteristics, school size and location. The analysis and reporting features in the AIM system will help educators see trends in academic performance among subgroups of students over time and across school districts. The goal is to provide information to educators to support their decision-making processes in regard to their instructional programs.

**Q. Will I be evaluated based on my students' performance?**

A. No, there is nothing about the AIM system that requires school districts to evaluate teachers based on their students' performance. Evaluation policies and practices are under the control of the local school district and the local bargaining agreement.

**Q. How does the special education portion affect teachers?**

A. The Special Education component that eliminates duplicative reporting requirements is projected to be active in April 2007. It supports special education teachers in completing and maintaining required paperwork, manages special education workflow and timelines, assists with data collection of special education student and staff information, documents decisions made during Child Study Team (CST) meetings, promotes compliance with state and federal regulations through validation checks, and provides documentation used when billing Medicaid.

**Q. How do I get further information about AIM?**

A. Additional information is posted on the OPI website at <http://www.opi.mt.gov/ITprojects/aim.html>. Or call 1-888-231-9393 and ask for Dave Nagel, AIM Project Manager.